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The first override of Bush's presidency is certain on the water projects bill, a favorite source of pork for Congress that passed this year by the usual overwhelming margin. Democratic leaders plan to keep passing bills to expand the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) until enough shaky Republican House members succumb to get the two-thirds override vote.

The third attempted override would involve a contemplated merger of Defense appropriations with spending for Labor-HHS. That package would contain so many pet earmarks for individual lawmakers that it would be difficult to sustain a veto.

### **CAMPBELL IN REFORM GROUP**

**One origin of Reagan 21, a bicameral Republican reform caucus unveiled Wednesday, is disgust by a junior House member, Irvine Rep. John Campbell, with freewheeling use of earmarks by one of the party's senior figures, Inland Empire Rep. Jerry Lewis.**

**Campbell, in his first full year in Congress, earlier this session stopped coming to California GOP House delegation caucuses because Lewis was attending them. Lewis' earmarks for friends generated Justice Department scrutiny, but he remained as ranking Republican on the House Appropriations Committee.**

**Reagan 21, committed to "a 21st Century conservative governing philosophy," pledges to end all earmarks. Its founding statement calls it "essential that all public officials, including members of Congress, be held to the highest possible standard." In addition to Campbell and other House reformers, the group includes Sens. Tom Coburn and Jim DeMint.**

## A FRIEND IN NEED

Gen. Michael V. Hayden, the CIA director coming under heavy Democratic fire for the first time, maintains good personal relations with one of the Bush administration's sharpest Democratic critics: Sen. Patrick Leahy.

Hayden has been attacked recently for launching an inquiry into CIA Inspector General John Helgeson because he has come down hard on the agency's treatment of detained prisoners. Hayden has recently discussed the situation privately with Leahy, a former vice chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee.

A career Air Force staff officer, Hayden was named director of the National Security Agency by President Clinton in his last year as president and was held over by President Bush. Republican members of Congress have complained privately that Hayden is too chummy with Democrats.

## CONSERVATIVES' CHOICE

A survey by the conservative weekly Human Events, participated in by over 2,000 subscribers and other people on its e-mail lists, showed they narrowly preferred former Sen. Fred Thompson for the Republican presidential nomination.

Thompson had 25 percent, followed by former New York Mayor Rudy Giuliani at 20 percent, former Arkansas Gov. Mike Huckabee with 19 percent and former Massachusetts Gov. Mitt Romney at 13 percent. Outcomes for other candidates were Reps. Ron Paul and Duncan Hunter, 8 percent each; Rep. Tom Tancredo, 5 percent; and Sen. John McCain, dead last at 2 percent.

McCain's low standing could be attributed to his position on illegal immigration, which was voted the most important issue raised by Human Events. Health came in last among the listed issues.

### SNOWE MELTS ON TAXES

Liberal Republican Sen. Olympia Snowe of Maine broke a solid Republican front on the Senate Finance Committee asking Democratic Chairman Max Baucus for committee consideration of a no-increase tax package.

Snowe did not sign the letter Wednesday calling for relief from expansion of the individual Alternative Minimum Tax (AMT) without offsetting increases in tax revenue. "We are willing to work with you," the Republicans told Baucus, "to pass tax relief, including relief for the AMT, that does not include tax increases."

Sen. Chuck Grassley, ranking Republican on the Finance Committee and a maverick on tax issues recently, led off the party letter. Signers included moderate Sen. Gordon Smith, who faces a serious challenge for re-election in Oregon next year.